

## The Conservation Land

The conservation land consists of two areas connected by an easement through a short section of private property. The Annursnac section lies between Annursnac Hill to the south and Strawberry Hill to the north, a 118-acre property purchased by the Town of Concord from Harvard University in 1970. The area evidently supported the Native American taste for wild strawberries because the Algonquin name Annursnac has been interpreted to mean, “place to pick strawberries”. A possibly more likely meaning associated with 365-foot high Annursnac Hill is “secure hill”. The varied terrain of woodlands, meadows, and wetland is intersected by Baptist Brook and the Tennessee Gas Pipeline right of way.

An adjoining section to the south extends to Commerford Road along the Acton-Concord town line and west of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline right-of-way and the Black Horse Place development. Its main feature is the scenic Baptist Brook that courses through a deep cut with views from trails above and below. The headwaters of the brook are the wetlands of Annursnac which drain through the brook, eventually emptying into Nashoba Brook.

## Location and Access

Access with limited vehicle parking is located off of Strawberry Hill Road a short distance from the junction with College Road where a large sign “Annursnac Conservation Area” identifies the entrance. A second access is at the entrance to Black Horse Place off of Commerford Road. The trail head is located across the entrance road from a small public parking lot.

**Dog Owners:** *Keep dogs under your direct control at all times, away from private yards and buildings. It is the duty of each person who owns, possesses, or controls a dog to remove and dispose of any feces left by his or her dog.*

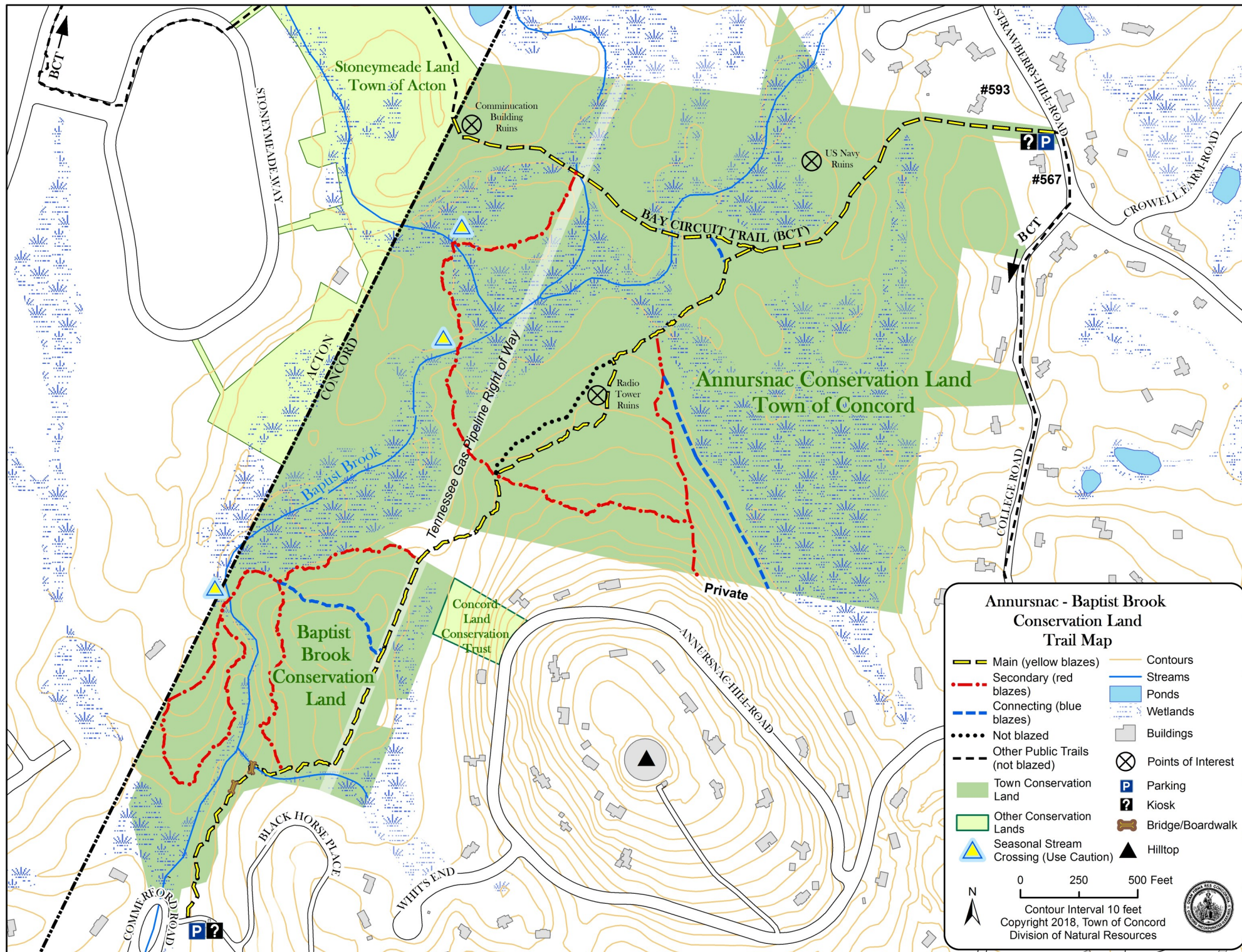


## Annursnac - Baptist Brook Conservation Land Trail Guide



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# ANNURSNAC - BAPTIST BROOK CONSERVATION LAND

## Annursnac Points of Interest

### Varied Terrain and Habitat

The Annursnac land, 118 acres in all, has hilly woodlands and swampy low lands. Fine stands of white pine grow on the higher land with red maple, birch, and marshy vegetation in the wet areas. Trails that climb the side of Annursnac Hill reach heights 80 feet above the low areas.



### Agricultural Use

Stone walls and overgrown apple orchards reveal Annursnac's agricultural past. Early settlers herded swine near the base of the hill and referred to it as the "hog pens". A pig farm owned by Conact Farm Trust of Lexington was located here until 1940, with two piggeries and a cottage, none of which remains.

### Communication Building Ruins

At the northwest corner beside the main trail are the ruins of a 41-foot by 24-foot concrete structure and radio tower. Coinciding with the development of Hanscom Air Base in 1941, the U.S. Army Air Corps leased 16.5 acres to build and operate a facility for tracking aircraft arrivals and departures from the airfield,

and as a radio direction/finder station. The structure is believed to be part of that installation. The 1958 U.S. Geological Survey Map, Maynard Quadrangle, labeled the site "Radio Tower", but today only four concrete mounting pads remain where the tower stood. From 1959 to 1969 it was an off-base installation known as the U.S. Air Force Strawberry Hill Electronics Research Annex.

### Antenna Research

In 1949 Harvard University purchased 63 acres of the farm land for use as an antenna research and test site by the Departments of Physics and Applied Science. Evidence of past use for communication purposes can be found along the main trail where the remains of a downed radio tower are becoming overgrown with vegetation. Concrete foundations of equipment storage buildings remain along the main trail just in from the chain gate at the Strawberry Hill entrance. A rusting structure emblazoned with "U. S. Navy" once contained Signal Corps electronics, probably from the WWII era.



## Baptist Brook Points of Interest

### The Robbins Family Farm

From as early as 1760, the Robbins family owned a large farm of about 200 acres along what is now Route 2A in Concord and Acton that included the Baptist Brook property. The home of John Robbins (1762-1836) at 144 Great Road, now the Powers Gallery, was once the center of that farm. John was the Captain of Acton's Minutemen Company and a prominent figure in Acton town affairs. On his death the property passed to son Elbridge (1810-1891) who was the father of Webster Robbins (1860-1917). Webster owned the Baptist Brook property on a 50-acre portion of the family land. He was a purveyor of horses, the horse association staying with the land, a fitting connection with the name Black Horse Place adjacent to the conservation land.



*Concord Enterprise Newspaper  
advertisement, 1901*

## Tennessee Gas Pipeline Right of Way

The 50-foot wide Tennessee Gas Pipeline right-of-way that passes through the Annursnac-Baptist Brook Conservation Land has been a landmark since its construction in 1968. It serves as a recreational corridor, the main trail through the Baptist Brook section following the right-of-way for some distance. Yellow-tipped standpipes serve as trail markers.



## Baptist Brook

Baptist Brook flows from north to south through the entire conservation land, conveying water from the wetlands in the northern portion of Annursnac, eventually flowing into Nashoba Brook. The origin of the brook's name is not known, though Baptist Brook is identified in the Deeds for the property.

The brook is the main landscape feature of the Baptist Brook section. The brook can be viewed in a deep ravine to the west from the elevated red-blazed trail, or along side it on the lower loop trail. This hemlock gorge represents a unique natural feature in Concord and provides high value wildlife habitat as well as

important buffering habitat to maintain the quality and ecological integrity of Baptist Brook. Along the low side, an old ditch parallels the base of a rock outcrop with several channels for drainage into the brook.



## Suggested Walks

**Walk to Stoneymeade** - Follow the main yellow-blazed trail from the Strawberry Hill Road parking area. Bear right at the next two trail intersections to stay on the northern branch of the yellow-blazed trail (also the Bay Circuit Trail - BCT) passing through low woodlands and wetlands, and crossing the Tennessee Gas Pipeline right-of-way.

The Concord section terminates just past the WWII communication ruins. The trail then continues through the Acton Stoneymeade Land. Reverse direction to return to the parking area. Walking time: 20 minutes each way.

**Annursnac Loop** - From the Strawberry Hill Road parking area, follow the main yellow-blazed trail. Bear right at the next two trail intersections to stay on the northern branch of the yellow-blazed trail (also the BCT). Just past the crossing of the Tennessee Gas Pipeline

turn left onto a secondary red-blazed trail. Follow this red-blazed trail through woods, crossing two brooks and the gas pipeline to a junction with the main yellow-blazed trail. Continue straight ahead on the red-blazed trail proceeding along the side of Annursnac Hill. At the red-blazed trail junction, turn left and follow the red-blazed trail to the junction with the main yellow-blazed trail. Turn right onto the yellow-blazed trail, bearing right at the next two forks to stay on the yellow-blazed trail to return to the parking area. Walking time: 45 minutes.

## Annursnac - Baptist Brook Walk -

Follow the main yellow-blazed trail from the Strawberry Hill Road entrance. Bear left at the yellow-blazed intersection. The trail leads to the Baptist Brook section along the Tennessee Gas Pipeline right of way to the Black Horse Place parking lot. It passes through woodlands, past antenna research ruins, and crosses an intermittent stream. Reverse direction to return to the Strawberry Hill entrance. Walking time: 25 minutes each way.

**Baptist Brook Loop** - Follow the yellow-blazed trail from the Black Horse Place parking lot. Turn left onto the red-blazed trail after the two bog bridges and view Baptist Brook from high vantage points. At an intersection with a red and blue-blazed trail, turn left onto the red-blazed trail that crosses the brook and loops through forest and wetlands. The trail offers intimate views of the brook, crossing an old drainage ditch on return back to the brook crossing. Turn right at the junction with the blue-blazed trail and then right onto the yellow-blazed trail to return to the parking lot. Walking time: 35 minutes.